



onlooker's DIARY

SLOWLY but surely, pieces in the puzzle of Oldbury United are fitting in.

Wycombe Wanderers' third round Amateur Cup opponents, set to visit Loakes Park on Saturday, February 13, were almost totally unknown down South until last week's 7-1 annihilation of Newquay aroused interest in them.

On Tuesday night however they gave a relatively poor account of themselves in going down 1-0 to semi-professionals Atherstone in the Central Counties Floodlight League — a competition they won last season.

Midfield man Eddie Duffield missed the outing due to a rib injury but is confidently expected to be back by this Saturday and to play at Wycombe.

Their next opponents, strangely enough, are Highgate United, one of several Midland Combination clubs to enjoy

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giant killing runs in recent Amateur Cup campaigns.

It was, remember Highgate, whose clash with Enfield had to be postponed after lightning struck the pitch, killing one of their players.

One mystery, among the many, about Oldbury has been cleared up. If you saw in the national press that they play in the Worcestershire Combination, that is because until four seasons ago this is what it was called.

It has since been renamed the West Midland Combination.

Although Oldbury got off to a bad start this season they are now — Tuesday apart — in fine form. Certainly, under 31 years old manager Alan Hawkes they are as fit as any other Midland club — probably fitter.

Hawkes assistant, coach Wyn Bowen, and perhaps Hawkes as well, can be expected at Didcot to watch Wanderers, on Saturday.

Travel may broaden the mind, but for Bowen at least it also broadens his knowledge of the opposition.

For the second round tie at

Newquay he made two expeditions to the West Country and watched them first at Launceston and then Penzance. So with the actual trip to Newquay last week, he estimates about 1,600 miles worth of travelling all told.

Like Wycombe's assistant, team boss John Reardon, who managed Chesham to the 1968 final, Bowen has seen Cup success before. He was coach to Alvechurch in their run to the semi final a few years ago.

In case of a replay, Wanderers' fans might like to take

note that this particular Oldbury lies just inside the Worcestershire border between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. But that's one journey they won't be exactly eager to make.

After all, it's the opposite direction to Wembley isn't it?

CUP TICKETS TIMETABLE

THE process for buying tickets for the Cup match is similar to previous games, although prices are slightly higher.

Seats for centre blocks C and E will be selling at 8s., while A, B and F blocks are to cost 7s., and it will be 6s. for tickets to stand in the enclosure.

Wanderers have no home game before the tie, but tickets can be bought from the ground tonight (7-9 p.m.), tomorrow (10 a.m. to noon), Monday, Wednesday and Thursday (7-9 p.m.), and if necessary Friday also (between 7 and 9 p.m.).

Next Wednesday is the deadline for season ticket holders wishing to claim their seats. After that, as last time, they'll be on sale to the general public.

Those wishing to buy their seats tomorrow, will also be able to watch Reading 'A' take on West Ham's 'A' team in the South East Counties League at Loakes Park, kick off 11 a.m.

Tuesday is of course the trip to Woking, and thus there will be no sales that night.